Policy, Guidelines and Procedures 1985 / 05 / 02

Materials Resource Centres

Alberta

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MATERIALS RESOURCE CENTRES

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education established the Materials Resource Centre in Edmonton in 1971 in order to provide special format materials to visually impaired students integrated into regular classrooms. With the emphasis on Canadian textbooks and the limited resources available in the field, these materials are frequently too expensive or too difficult for local school jurisdictions to provide. Consequently, the department had developed a pool of resources to assist schools with visually impaired students in their classroom.

Growing demand led to the creation of the Southern Materials Resource Centre in Calgary in 1982. Both centres now share the production and distribution of special format materials and equipment throughout Alberta.

POLICY

Alberta Education, through the Northern and Southern Materials Resource Centres for the Visually Impaired, provides special format materials in braille, audiotape and large print to visually impaired students, preschool through Grade 12, in authorized education programs in Alberta and provides such aids and equipment as necessary to enable students to make the most effective use of their educational materials.

GUIDELINES

1. The Materials Resource Centres will provide service to school systems with visually impaired students in their classrooms, provided these students have been assessed or referred by a Consultant for the Visually Impaired or have been recommended to a Consultant by another specialist in the education of the visually impaired.

2. The Materials Resource Centres will provide support materials and demonstration equipment to teachers, teachers aids, consultants or other school personnel who work directly with visually impaired students and need such materials in order to assist these students.

3. The Northern Materials Resource Centre will provide services to schools in Zones 1, 2, and 3. The Southern Materials Resource Centre will provide services to schools in Zones 4, 5, and 6. Both Centres will work cooperatively, and will operate under common policies and procedures in order to provide materials and equipment to students throughout Alberta.

4. Alberta Education supports the sharing of resources interprovincially and will loan materials, when available, to Department of Education Special Materials Resource Centres in other provinces.

PROCEDURES

1. The Materials Resource Centres will provide school jurisdictions with information on available services, materials and equipment.

2. The Materials Resource Centres will acquire and/or produce special format textbooks and supplementary reading materials according to the approved Alberta curriculum.

3. The Materials Resource Centres will acquire special electronic and mechanical aids and equipment according to approved acquisition plans and projections.

4. The Materials Resource Centres will produce materials unavailable from other sources according to the following priorities:

   Priority 1 – basic textbooks and references on the Alberta curriculum

   Priority 2 – recommended textbooks and references

   Priority 3 – supplementary reading materials

   Priority 4 – teacher prepared materials: where students will be severely disadvantaged if materials are not available or where no other support services at the level required are available.

   These materials are produced according to established standards in the field (see definition section).

5. The Materials Resource Centres obtain only limited clearance of copyright for produced materials. Such materials cannot be written in or recopied.

6. School jurisdictions must give four months advance notice for new materials requiring production.

7. The Materials Resource Centres will withdraw materials determined to be out of date, convey inaccurate information, be technically faulty or fail to reflect current curriculum interests.

8. Materials and equipment will be loaned for the duration of the student's school course, term or year.

9. School jurisdictions are responsible for the care and keeping of materials and equipment in their schools and are responsible for the return of items in proper packing at their own expense.

10. The Materials Resource Centres will repair and maintain equipment listed in their inventories.

DEFINITIONS

VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

The visually impaired child is one whose visual condition is such that it interferes with his ability to learn unless educational adaptations are made. Visual limitations may be further divided into the categories of blind and partially sighted.

Blind: Educationally, a child is considered to be blind and a braille-user if, after all possible visual correction, he must depend for learning upon senses other than vision. All students in this group are legally blind.

Partially Sighted: Educationally, a child is considered to be partially sighted if, after all possible visual correction, he requires special materials and services, but uses visual media including print in learning. The more severely visually impaired students in this group are also legally blind. After correction they will continue to have severely restricted visual fields and/or visual acuities, in the better eye, of 6/60 metric or 20/200 English or less. Some partially sighted students are legally blind. These students often require the same degree of support services as blind or braille-using students.

STANDARDS

Standards used by the Materials Resource Centres are based on the following:

Braille	Braille transcription is done according to rules and procedures in the **Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing, English Braille American Edition, 1959. Transcriber's Guide to English Braille, Code of Braille Textbook Formats and Techniques, Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation 1972 Revision, An Introduction to Braille Mathematics and Provisional Braille Code for Computer Notation, 1972,** and provisional updates agreed to by the CNIB Standards Committee and NBA Council.
Audiotape	Sound Recordings are done according to the **NBA Recording Manual, 3rd Edition** and the locally produced **Audiotape Production Manual, 1983 Revised.**
Large Print	Textbooks are enlarged according to the locally produced **Large Print Production Manual, 1981.**
Cataloguing	Cataloguing of special format materials is done according to **Anglo American Cataloguing Rules II, Library of Congress Subject Headings and MARC Coding.**